

# Gamilaraay language

The **Gamilaraay** or **Kamilaroi** (see below for other spellings) language is a Pama–Nyungan language of the Wiradhuric subgroup found mostly in south-east Australia. It was the traditional language of the *Gamilaraay*, but is now *endangered*—according to *Ethnologue*, only 35 speakers were left in 2006, all mixing Gamilaraay and English.<sup>[7]</sup> However, thousands of Australians of mixed descent identify as Gamilaraay. The Gamilaraay language is also taught in some Australian schools.

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## Name

The name Gamilaraay means *gamil*-having, with *gamil* being the word for "no". Other dialects and languages are similarly named after their respective words for "no". (Compare the division between *langues d'oïl* and *langues d'oc* in France, distinguished by their respective words for "yes".)

Spellings of the name, pronounced [ḡaːˈmɪlaˈɹaːj] in the language itself, include:

- **Goomeroi**
- **Kamilaroi**

Gamilaraay	
<span></span> <div>Darling tributaries</div>	
Native to	Australia
Region	Central northern New South Wales
Ethnicity	Gamilaraay, Ualarai, Kawambarai
Extinct	"recently extinct" as of 2007 <sup>[1][2]</sup>
Revival	105 claim to speak Gamilaraay, 1% of total population (2016 census)
Language family	<div>Pama–Nyungan <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li> Wiradhuric<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><b>Gamilaraay</b></li></ul></li></ul></div>
Dialects	<div>Gamilaraay Yuwaalaraay Yuwaaliyaay (Euahlayi) Gunjbaraay Gawambaraay Wirray Wirray (Wiriwiri)<sup>[3]</sup> Walaraay<sup>[4]</sup> </div>
Language codes	
ISO 639-3	kld
Glottolog	<span>gami1243</span> ( <span>http://glottolog.org/resource/language/id/gami1243</span> ) <sup>[5]</sup>
AIATSIS <sup>[6]</sup>	D23 ( <span>https://collection.aiatsis.gov.au/australian-aboriginal-languages/language/D23</span> )

- Gamilaraay
- Gamilaroi

## Geographic distribution

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### Dialects

- Yuwaalaraay
- Yuwaaliyaay (Euahlayi)<sup>[8]</sup>
- Gunjbaraay
- Gawambaraay
- Wirray Wirray (Wiriwiri)<sup>[3]</sup>
- Walaraay



A map of the tribes of New South Wales, published in 1892. Gamilaraay is marked I.

## History

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Southern Aboriginal guides led the surveyor John Howe to the upper Hunter River above present-day Singleton in 1819. They told him that the country there was "Coomery Roy [=Gamilaraay] and more further a great way", meaning to the north-west, over the Liverpool Ranges (see O'Rourke 1997: 29). This is probably the first record of the name.

A basic wordlist collected by Thomas Mitchell in February, 1832, is the earliest written record of Gamilaraay.

Presbyterian missionary William Ridley studied the language from 1852 to 1856.



Traditional lands of Australian Aboriginal tribes around Sydney, New South Wales<sup>[9]</sup>

## Phonology

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### Vowels

	Front	Back
High	i ⟨i⟩, i: ⟨ii⟩	u ⟨u⟩, u: ⟨uu⟩
Low	a ⟨a⟩, a: ⟨aa⟩	

/wa/ is realized as [wo].

### Consonants

	<u>Peripheral</u>		<u>Laminal</u>		<u>Apical</u>	
	<u>Bilabial</u>	<u>Velar</u>	<u>Palatal</u>	<u>Dental</u>	<u>Alveolar</u>	<u>Post-alveolar</u>
<u>Stop</u>	b	g	ɟ <dj>	ɗ <dh>	d	
<u>Nasal</u>	m	ŋ <ng>	ɲ <ny>	ɳ <nɰ>	n	
<u>Lateral</u>					l	
<u>Rhotic</u>					r <rr>	ɭ <r>
<u>Semivowel</u>	w		j <y>			

Initially, /wu/ and /ji/ may be simplified to [u] and [i].

## Stress

All long vowels in a word get equal stress. If no long vowels are present, stress falls on the first syllable. Secondary stress falls on short vowels, which are two syllables to the right or to the left of a stressed syllable.

# Grammar

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## Pronouns

### Gawambaraay Dialect

Subject pronouns<sup>[10]</sup>:

	Singular	Dual	Plural
1st person	ngaya	ngali	ngiyaani
2nd person	ngindu	ngindaali	ngindaay
3rd person	nguru	(nguru)gali	ganu

# Gamilaraay words in English

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Several loanwords have entered Australian English from Gamilaraay, including:

Common nouns		
Anglicised form	Gamilaraay	Meaning
bindi-eye, bindii, bindies	bindayaa	The burrs of several plant species ( <i>Emex australis</i> , <i>Tribulus terrestris</i> , and <i>Soliva sessilis</i> ) that stick in one's feet
brolga	burruga	A bird species, <i>Grus rubicunda</i>
possibly budgerigar	gidjirrigaa	A bird species, <i>Melopsittacus undulatus</i>
galah	gilaa	A bird species, <i>Eolophus roseicapilla</i>
yarran	yarraan	A species of acacia tree, <i>Acacia homalophylla</i> <sup>[11]</sup>
Proper nouns		
Anglicised form	Gamilaraay	Meaning
Kamilaroi	gamilaraay	The Gamilaraay people or language
Place names		
Anglicised form	Gamilaraay	Meaning
Boggabri	bagaaybaraay	having creeks
Boggabilla	bagaaybila	full of creeks
Collarenebri	galariinbaraay	having <u>acacia</u> blossoms

## References

1. Gamilaraay language (<https://www.ethnologue.com/18/language/kld/>) at *Ethnologue* (18th ed., 2015)
2. ABS. "Census 2016, Language spoken at home by Sex (SA2+)" ([http://stat.data.abs.gov.au/ln dex.aspx?DataSetCode=ABS\\_C16\\_T09\\_SA](http://stat.data.abs.gov.au/ln dex.aspx?DataSetCode=ABS_C16_T09_SA)). *stat.data.abs.gov.au*. Retrieved 2017-11-01.
3. There is quite some confusion over the names Wirray Wirray, Wiriyarray, and Wirraayarray. See *AIATSIS:Wirray Wirray* (<http://austlang.aiatsis.gov.au/main.php?code=D66>)
4. Dixon, Robert M. W. (2002). *Australian Languages: Their Nature and Development* (<http://www.cambridge.org/catalogue/catalogue.asp?isbn=0521473780>). Cambridge University Press. p. xxxiv.
5. Hammarström, Harald; Forkel, Robert; Haspelmath, Martin, eds. (2017). "Yuwaalaraay-Gamilaraay" (<http://glottolog.org/resource/languoid/id/gami1243>). *Glottolog 3.0*. Jena, Germany: Max Planck Institute for the Science of Human History.
6. D23 (<https://collection.aiatsis.gov.au/austlang/language/D23>) Gamilaraay at the Australian Indigenous Languages Database, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies
7. "Gamilaraay" (<http://www.ethnologue.com/language/kld>). *Ethnologue*. Retrieved 2013-12-10.
8. For more information on the Euahlayi dialect and tribe, see *The Euahlayi Tribe. A Study of Aboriginal Life in Australia* by K. Langloh Parker (<http://www.gutenberg.org/files/3819/3819-h/3819-h.htm#intro>).
9. This map is indicative only.
10. Austin, P. (1993) *A Reference Grammar of Gamilaraay, Northern New South Wales*.
11. *Oxford Dictionary of English*, p 2,056

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## Further reading

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- Ash, Anna et al. Gamilaraay, Yuwaaaraay and Yuwaalayaay Dictionary. Alice Springs: IAD Press 2003.
- Parker, K. Langloh (1905). *The Euahlayi Tribe: A Study of Aboriginal Life in Australia* ([https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/The\\_Euahlayi\\_Tribe](https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/The_Euahlayi_Tribe)). London: Archibald Constable and Company.
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## External links

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- <http://yuwaalaraay.org/> has information about recent Gamilaraay and Yuwaalaraay language development and links to numerous language resources.
- The Gamilaraay (Kamilaroi) Language, northern New South Wales — A Brief History of Research ([http://www.hrelp.org/aboutus/staff/peter\\_austin/AustinGamil.pdf](http://www.hrelp.org/aboutus/staff/peter_austin/AustinGamil.pdf)) (PDF)
- Gutenberg Project Browse By Language: Gamilaraay (<http://www.gutenberg.org/browse/languages/kld>)
- Online dictionary (<https://web.archive.org/web/20140601072239/http://www1.aiatsis.gov.au/AS/EDA/WWWVLPages/AborigPages/LANG/GAMDICT/GAMDICT.HTM>)
- Gamilaraay Online dictionary (<http://www.dnathan.com/language/gamilaraay/dictionary/GAMDICTF.HTM>) by Peter Austin and David Nathan
- A Reference Grammar of Gamilaraay ([https://www.academia.edu/2457676/A\\_Reference\\_Grammar\\_of\\_Gamilaraay\\_northern\\_New\\_South\\_Wales](https://www.academia.edu/2457676/A_Reference_Grammar_of_Gamilaraay_northern_New_South_Wales))
- Bibliographies of published ([https://aiatsis.gov.au/sites/default/files/docs/collections/language\\_bibs/gamilaraay\\_gamilaroi\\_kamilaroi\\_published\\_1.pdf](https://aiatsis.gov.au/sites/default/files/docs/collections/language_bibs/gamilaraay_gamilaroi_kamilaroi_published_1.pdf)), rare ([https://aiatsis.gov.au/sites/default/files/docs/collections/language\\_bibs/gamilaraay\\_gamilaroi\\_kamilaroi\\_rare\\_1.pdf](https://aiatsis.gov.au/sites/default/files/docs/collections/language_bibs/gamilaraay_gamilaroi_kamilaroi_rare_1.pdf)) or special ([https://aiatsis.gov.au/sites/default/files/docs/collections/language\\_bibs/gamilaraay\\_gamilaroi\\_kamilaroi\\_special\\_1.pdf](https://aiatsis.gov.au/sites/default/files/docs/collections/language_bibs/gamilaraay_gamilaroi_kamilaroi_special_1.pdf)) materials on Gamilaraay language and people, at the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies
- Bibliographies of published ([https://aiatsis.gov.au/sites/default/files/docs/collections/language\\_bibs/yuwaalaraay\\_euahlayi\\_yuwaaliyaay\\_published\\_1.pdf](https://aiatsis.gov.au/sites/default/files/docs/collections/language_bibs/yuwaalaraay_euahlayi_yuwaaliyaay_published_1.pdf)), rare ([https://aiatsis.gov.au/sites/default/files/docs/collections/language\\_bibs/yuwaalaraay\\_euahlayi\\_yuwaaliyaay\\_rare\\_1.pdf](https://aiatsis.gov.au/sites/default/files/docs/collections/language_bibs/yuwaalaraay_euahlayi_yuwaaliyaay_rare_1.pdf)) or special ([https://aiatsis.gov.au/sites/default/files/docs/collections/language\\_bibs/yuwaalaraay\\_e](https://aiatsis.gov.au/sites/default/files/docs/collections/language_bibs/yuwaalaraay_e)

uahlayi\_yuwaaliyaay\_special\_1.pdf) materials on Yuwaalaraay language and people, at the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies

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